



DELAINE EASTIN
State Superintendent of Public Instruction

CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT
OF
EDUCATION
721 Capitol Mall
Sacramento, CA
95814

May 2002

Dear School Food Service Director:

For the past several years, school food service directors have partnered with the California Department of Health Services (DHS), the California Department of Education (CDE), the Consumers Union, and the Managed Risk Medical Insurance Board in promoting the **Healthy Families and Medi-Cal for Families Programs (HFP/MCFP), the State's low-cost and free health insurance programs for children and families**. These programs offer comprehensive medical, dental, and vision care coverage to families who are eligible.

How can you help? You may help by simply including the enclosed HFP/MCFP Request for Information (RFI) in the Free and Reduced Price Meal Application and other informational packets distributed to parents.

Hundreds of districts have partnered with us, resulting in over 100,000 RFI's returned by parents requesting health insurance information and applications. Schools continue to be one of the top referral sources for HFP/MCFP.

As you know, good health is essential for children to achieve their developmental and educational potential. Currently, there are over 1.4 million children in California who are eligible for HFP/MCFP who do not have health insurance. Children with a family income below 250 percent of the federal income guidelines may qualify; a family of four with an income of up to \$3,771 per month may be eligible. Also, many children participating in the National School Lunch Program's free or reduced-price meal program may be eligible, but are not enrolled in the State's health insurance programs.

The enclosed RFI was developed for interested parents to learn more about the State's health insurance programs. We encourage you to do the following:

- **Include the enclosed HFP/MCFP RFI entitled "Good News About Health Coverage!" with school materials sent home to parents (such as meal application packets, menus, and/or meal benefit eligibility notices); distribute them at parent meetings, parent-teacher conferences, and open-houses; and make them available in appropriate public areas.** If you are unable to duplicate large quantities, bulk quantities are available through DHS at no cost by using the enclosed order form. The RFI is also available in 11 languages.
- **Send DHS the RFIs that are returned by parents to the address indicated at the bottom of the RFI.** If your district would prefer to retain the RFIs for direct follow-up with parents, please inform DHS of the total count returned to your school by e-mailing: lweidert@dhs.ca.gov.

Your participation and support of our combined efforts has played a critical role in reducing the number of uninsured children in California. I offer my sincerest appreciation for your time and commitment to the health and learning readiness of California's children. If you have any questions, please contact me at (916) 323-7311 or Linda Rivera, Manager, Program Resources, Education, and Policy Unit, at (916) 323-7173, (800) 952-5609, or lriviera@cde.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Marilyn Briggs, Director
Nutrition Services Division
Assistant Superintendent of Public Instruction

Enclosures